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*The pernicious Effects of an intemperate Indulgence in* SENSUAL PLEASURES.

bg3. e.15.
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A

# SERMON

Preached before the

# UNIVERSITY

OF

# *OXFORD,*

At St. *MARY*'s,

On SUNDAY, *March* 13. 1747-8.

By JOHN TOTTIE, M.A. Fellow of *Worceſter College*, Archdeacon of *Worceſter*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

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*J. PURNELL,*

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TO THE

# Young Gentlemen

OF THE

UNIVERSITY of *OXFORD*,

This DISCOURSE

Made publick,

By the Deſire of their Governours,

For their ſerious Peruſal,

And as conducive to the Security

of their Conduct,

Is very affectionately addreſſed

By the AUTHOR.

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Most publick,

By the Duties of their Governors,

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## 2 Tim. III. 4.

*— Lovers of Pleaſures more than Lovers of God.*

THE Lovers of Pleaſures here mentioned by the Apoſtle are, as the Original word properly imports, the Lovers of Senſual Pleaſures: And they are deſcribed as inordinate Lovers of them, as Men addicted to Voluptuouſneſs beyond a Senſe of Duty or the reſtraint of Reaſon and Religion. And doubtleſs this is deſigned to be repreſented to us as a Denomination of great Malignity, becauſe it is ranked with a long Train of the moſt enormous and profligate Sinners; ſuch as, we are told at the firſt verſe of this Chapter, were to be the Characteriſtick and Diſgrace of the *laſt Days*, when *perillous Times* ſhould come. Without enquiring how far theſe dangerous Days began to diſcover themſelves even in the Apoſtolick Age, let it ſuffice that We ourſelves are certainly within the Period of Time here deſcribed; And whatever may be our Proportion of other Guilt, ſo far as an avowed Attachment to Pleaſures is deſtructive of the Principles, and inconſiſtent with the regular Duties of Re-

ligion, and is an Inlet to Vice and Diſorder, ſo far perillous Times are come. For to be Lovers of Pleaſures more than Lovers of God and our Duty is one of the apparent Diſtinctions of this Age; A Character ſo familiar to us that it ſeems to have loſt its natural Deformity, and is rather looked upon with Complacency than Abhorrence. But Opinion does not alter the Reality of things: A Life of Diſſoluteneſs cannot be innocent; and it will ever remain a moſt certain Truth, that an irregular Indulgence in Senſual Pleaſures is what above all things debaſes Human Nature, and ever has been and muſt be the Bane of Human Happineſs.

Can We therefore employ our Time more uſefully, than in endeavouring to reſcue ourſelves from the Enchantment of ſuch deluſive but unmanly and pernicious Pleaſures? Can I apply to you for this purpoſe in a more intereſting manner, than by laying before you the fatal Miſchiefs of Senſuality, by conſidering particularly what devaſtation it makes in every Conſtitution that is under the Dominion of it, from the loweſt Stage of the Animal Life to the higheſt Powers and Graces of the Intellectual and the Spiritual one? And although ſome of the following Remarks may ſeem rather to belong to an abandoned Proſtitution than to the leſſer Proficiencies in Voluptuouſneſs, yet they will be often found to be proportionably juſt in reſpect of the latter; or may ſerve at leaſt as a friendly Caution to thoſe who are making gradual advances in Vices of this kind,

kind, without reflecting upon their deceitful, inſinuating and encroaching Nature.

We will then conſider Man, in the firſt place, as a Creature endued with Animal Life, and furniſhed with all thoſe Senſations and Appetites which are the neceſſary Appendages thereunto. — And here, before we proceed, it may be proper to obſerve, that as they are born with us into the world and are an Eſſential part of our Conſtitution, an Imagination that the Perfection of our Being in its preſent ſtate conſiſts in I know not what Annihilation and Extirpation of them, is mere Enthuſiaſm, as contrary to the Sentiments of Reaſon as of Nature. This degree of Perfection we cannot attain to, 'till *this Corruptible ſhall have put on Incorruption*. If in this degenerate Condition of Humanity they are too apt to be licencious and inordinate, all that is expected from our Strength and Diſcretion is to watch over them with care, to direct them to their proper Objects, and to govern them with a prudent Reſtraint; leſt our natural Deſires ſhould grow impetuous and headſtrong, and run wild into ſinful Concupiſcence. — Let it be further remarked, that when Concupiſcence itſelf is ſaid to have the Nature of Sin, it is becauſe it is an irregular Tendency of the Appetites, either deſiring that which is not lawful, or purſuing that which is ſo, beyond the limits of Reaſon and Duty. Otherwiſe, the Deſires are Natural and therefore not Criminal, and the Gratification of them muſt be Innocent becauſe it is Neceſſary. We are

placed by Providence in this world not only under a Neceſſity of ſatisfying them for the ſupport of Life, but with a gracious Permiſſion to gratifie them with ſome degree of Indulgence beyond ſtrict Neceſſity, for the comfort and well being of it. This would not have been the caſe, had there been no poſſibility for us to have ſatisfied our Appetites with Innocence. They are not therefore abſolutely and in their own Nature Sinful; but they are too apt to be the Occaſions and Incitements to Sin. Even Good Men may fall into their Snare thro' Frailty or Inadvertency; And in this caſe, they cannot but feel and lament, as they will be allowed to offer in Plea at the great Tribunal, the Infirmities of Human Nature. But as for thoſe who ſubmit to their Dominion without reluctance, and joyfully obey the Call of every vicious Inclination, let them not vainly impute that Guilt to an Original Depravity, which is an acquired Corruption; nor charge thoſe Miſeries to the account of Nature, which are ſtrictly and properly their own.

And here indeed it is, in the early prevalence of Education and Habit, that our Infelicity begins. For were we accuſtomed from the beginning to live down to Nature, we ſhould find the Appetites in themſelves reaſonable and modeſt; asking little, ſatisfied with little; but like favourite Children they are ſoon corrupted by Indulgence, and being trained up in the School of Luxury they find many wants which are not natural to them: Being accu-

accuſtomed to be humoured, they become reſtleſs and importunate, and grow upon us in their demands by every Compliance. It is evident therefore that every unreaſonable Gratification is only raiſing a new Deſire, and while it ſeems to appeaſe the Appetites irritates them the more. Could we therefore lay an early reſtraint upon them, and learn to gratifie them no farther than God and Nature allow, it would be the way to avoid much trouble and diſquietude; We ſhould be leſs ſollicited, and They would be more contented.

Add to this, that when they have thus gained ſtrength and vigour, and their wants multiply upon them thro' Indulgence, then they ſoon grow wanton and fantaſtical; are roving from Pleaſure to Pleaſure; tired with the preſent Enjoyment, and eagerly exploring and purſuing freſh Objects of Delight: So that we are in a State of perpetual Agitation and Uneaſineſs, not only from the Violence of our Deſires, but from the Frowardneſs and Inconſtancy of their Humour. And what is ſtill more, and cannot but neceſſarily happen, we muſt feel in proportion to the Cravings of our irregular Appetites, impatience and fretfulneſs from Difficulties and Delays, and vexation from frequent Diſappointments. Such are the diſagreeable Senſations that embitter the Life of a Voluptuary, and multiply with the encreaſe of his Pleaſures.

As the Scene opens upon us, it grows far more diſtreſsful. The Appetites have been long indulged; they have the Maſtery; they have

have now the Reins in their hands; and are haſting to put a final period to all the pleaſurable Senſations of their Votaries, even by ſuch means as muſt be continually extinguiſhing and deadening the very Senſation itſelf. For an unwearied Application to Pleaſures Satiates and Surfeits rather than Satisfies; it weakens the Tone of the Animal Powers, and wears them gradually into Diſreliſh, and perhaps into Diſuſe, even before the Courſe of Nature brings on the Years, *when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no Pleaſure in them.* Enjoyments of this kind muſt be deſtructive of themſelves, becauſe they impair and deſtroy that quickneſs of the Faculties and that health of Conſtitution, upon which their very Nature depends. When the Senſes themſelves grow dull and wear away, the Pleaſures of them muſt of neceſſity be languid. And yet ſuch is the peculiar Infatuation of the Voluptuous Man, and what would be utterly incredible did not every Days Obſervation confirm the Truth of it in many a fatal Inſtance, So abſolute is their Dominion, ſo ſtrong is their Enchantment, that tho' they chaſtiſe him with Pain and Diſeaſes, and bring on the daily Decay of Health and Strength, with trembling Nerves and faultring Steps he crawls on in the ſame ſlippery Path, 'till he falls and drops into the Grave.

For the truth of the foregoing Obſervations we may appeal to Experience. Enquire of thoſe who have led a Life of Pleaſure, as it is falſely called, whether in reſpect of Self-enjoyment it be indeed preferable to a Life of Tem-

Temperance and Regularity. — Ask the Senſualiſt, who ſays *there is nothing better for a Man than that he ſhould eat and drink*, and whoſe happineſs depends upon the unwilling Returns of a jaded Appetite, Whether that Compound of high and delicate Meats which Luxury improved into an Art can ſupply, be not an offence to the Stomach, a Load to the Conſtitution and Poiſon to the Health? Whereas the Man that is not ſurfeited with Intemperance finds an enjoyment in his frugal Repaſts, which Artifice cannot give: He has no Loathings of the Appetite, no Oppreſſion of Spirits; His Sleep is ſweet; He *eats the Labour of his Hands*, and finds that the Bread of Induſtry and Temperance is far more delicious than the Dainties of Indolent Luxury. — Or *thoſe that ſit long at the Wine*, what real Pleaſure do they find in that Nauſea and Sickneſs, that Relaxation and Feebleneſs of Body, which Exceſs never fails to create? *Look not thou upon the Wine when it is red*, ſays the Wiſe Man, *when it giveth his Colour in the Cup, when it moveth itſelf aright: at the laſt, it biteth like a Serpent and ſtingeth like an Adder. Prov.* 23. 31. — Ask the Libidinous Man — nay rather does not his very appearance declare, that lawleſs Pleaſures are dearly bought; and that he has reaſon in the bitterneſs of his Soul to curſe thoſe Impurities, which prey upon the Conſtitution and are *Rottenneſs to the Bones*; which make Youth decrepit, and haſten on an early and unnatural Old Age? It is difficult to mention this Vice, and the foul train of Miſeries that

that attend it, in a decent and inoffenſive manner: Let me therefore cloſe this branch of my Diſcourſe in the words of high and Sacred Authority that will command your Reverence and Awe. *I beheld*, ſays Solomon, *among the Simple ones, I diſcerned among the Youths, a Young Man void of Underſtanding. And behold? there met him a Woman with the attire of an harlot, and ſubtle of heart. With her much fair ſpeech ſhe cauſed him to yield, with the flattering of her Lips ſhe forced him. He goeth after her ſtraightway, as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the correction of the Stocks: 'Till a Dart ſtrike thro' his Liver, as a Bird haſteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life. Prov. 7. 7, 9, 21, 22, 23. Remove thy way therefore far from a ſtrange Woman and come not nigh the door of her houſe; leſt thou mourn at the laſt, when thy Fleſh and thy Body are conſumed, and ſay, How have I hated Inſtruction and deſpiſed Reproof? Prov. 5. 8, 11, 12.*

I have been hitherto ſpeaking to the Senſualiſt as a Creature poſſeſſed of Animal Life, and furniſhed with thoſe Appetites which are its neceſſary Appendages; and have ſhewn the Expediency of his putting a Curb and reſtraint upon them, while poſſibly they may bear it, even upon his own Principles, for the ſake of preſerving that very Nature, upon which all his pleaſurable Senſations depend. But he muſt likewiſe conſider himſelf, however unwilling he may ſeem to do ſo, as a Being of a much higher order, as One endued with the ſuperiour Power of Reaſon and Underſtanding. —

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Let our next Enquiry therefore be, in what manner an intemperate Purſuit of Senſual Pleaſures muſt affect the Intellectual part of us, which raiſes us far above the Brutal Life, even to a participation of the Angelick Nature.

And here the firſt Conſideration that offers itſelf ariſes in ſome meaſure from the foregoing ones, and reſults from that Union of our Souls and Bodies, by which, in our preſent ſtate, they mutually act upon each other, and ſympathize in each other's Affections. Hence, as any violent or continued Diſorder in the Mind introduces a languid Indiſpoſition in our Bodily Frame, ſo the Infirmities of the Body do reciprocally enfeeble and diſpirit the Mind. If therefore an aſſiduous Application to Senſual Pleaſures does certainly impair our Bodily health and ſtrength, it will proportionably waſte the health and ſtrength of the Mind: Nor is it poſſible, ~~that~~ where Incontinence, Riot and Luxury have enervated the Conſtitution, that the Soul ſhould ſtill retain its vigour, or have Elaſticity enough to exert itſelf in Speculation or Action. View but the Man of Pleaſures after a few Years ſpent in the purſuit of them, and behold! frequently in the end, what inſupportable Dejection, what Gloomineſs and Horrours overſhadow and ſit heavy upon his Soul!

But this is not all: Senſual Pleaſures are hurtful to the Mind other ways than by Depreſſing it; and the Miſchief they do is often felt in the Intellectual Faculties even be-

fore it is derived from the Conſtitution. They ſhut out, in the firſt place, the neceſſary Supplies of Knowledge, which is the food and nouriſhment of the Underſtanding, and without which it cannot grow up to its full Proportion and Maturity. For an Advancement in Knowledge ſuppoſes Diſcipline, Application, Aſſiduity, Labour; Exerciſes, which are directly oppoſite to the whole Scope and Syſtem of the Man of Pleaſures; who cannot well be thought to have either Leiſure or Inclination for ſuch painful Employments. For *painful* they muſt be to thoſe who can have little Taſte or Reliſh for the Pleaſures of the Underſtanding, which are of a quite different and ſuperiour Kind to thoſe of Senſe, and to which it muſt ſeem againſt Nature for them to riſe, who wallow in the Mire and are entangled in Senſuality. By this means, thro' the want of Cultivation and Improvement, "the Intellectuals loſe their Ability and grow "unſerviceable by too little uſe, as the Senſes "decay and are worn out by too much."

Add to this that Senſual Pleaſures are directly injurious to the very Eſſence of the Mind, and maim it in all its Faculties; ſo as to fruſtrate in a great meaſure any degree of Application, could we be ſuppoſed to make uſe of it. It is with the Conſtitution of the Mind as of the Body; no Strength of it can withſtand the repeated aſſaults of Intemperance and Exceſs. They ſpread a Torpor, as it were, over the Rational Soul, and render it impotent in all its Functions. The fer-

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ment of Wine and the fire of Luſt raiſe an impure Vapour in the Brain, which overclouds and darkens the Underſtanding. The Imagination, that admirable Faculty, whoſe proper employment it is to bring into our view all the wonderful and beautiful Scenes of the Creation, is no longer the Hand-maid of Reaſon, but the Creature of our Appetites. This fair Mirrour is blotted over with the Traces of foul Deſire, and every Avenue is ſhut up againſt the admiſſion of any Object that might poliſh and refine it. Invention cannot expatiate, becauſe it cannot break looſe from thoſe Earthly Senſual encumbrances which oppreſs it. The Memory becomes impaired; nor would it be any great misfortune ſhould it be entirely obliterated, ſince it is at beſt but the Storehouſe of Senſuality and Impurity; not has Contemplation laid up there any Treaſures that can deſerve a Review. No time has been employed in the Exerciſe of Thought and Reflection; whence ariſes not only an Impatience but an Inability of Thinking. In ſhort, the Rational part of the Voluptuous Man is incorporated, as it were, into the Animal one; all his Thoughts are the Thoughts of his Heart, and are like that, ſenſual and polluted; prompted, directed and circumſcribed by the Appetites. This is by no means an Imaginary Repreſentation; on the contrary, they are the Obſervations of common Experience: For how often have we ſeen and lamented, that the brighteſt Natural Parts have fallen a Victim to Pleaſures, hav-

ing been devoted to their Service and Command, 'till they have been gradually worn away, and have been utterly ſtupified and loſt?

Here doubtleſs the Libertine will be ready with an Air of Triumph to ask, Where elſe is to be found that Gayety and Sprightlineſs, that flow of Mirth and thoſe Sallies of Wit, which enliven the Converſation of the Men of Pleaſure, beyond all that Temperance and Sobriety can pretend to? Does this argue the Want or Decay of Parts; is it not rather a proof of their Energy and Vivacity? Be it ſo. But alas! all this boaſted Fire is, in the Scripture Language, *like the Crackling of Thorns under a Pot: Eccleſ. 7. 6.* So long as the Fuel continues to be ſupplied, it may raiſe violent Ebullitions; it may give a Glaring Light; but it is all the while Raging, Noiſy and Self-conſuming: It is a Flame that is rather Scorching than Refreſhing; and how ſoon is it extinguiſhed, and leaves no remains but Aſhes! To quit the Metaphor — This Livelineſs of Wit, as it is called, is ſeldom Rational, or reconcileable to Good Senſe or Decency: It is not the Offſpring of the Underſtanding; and the Paſſions themſelves muſt be either vitiated or inflamed to have a Reliſh for it. For what is it after all, but either the Extravagance and Phrenzy of an Over-heated Fancy, or the offenſive Impurity of a Debauched one? Is it the Voice of that ſerene permanent Joy which is in the Dwellings of the Righteous — the Companion of Wiſdom and Vertue? Can it exiſt but in the midſt of Laughter and Folly? Or will it bear

bear the Review of one Moments cool Reflection? And when the Raving of this Feverfit is over, does it not end in Wearineſs, Faintneſs and Remorſe? So that upon the whole, we have little Reaſon either to envy or imitate the gayeſt and wittieſt Debaucheries of the Men of Pleaſure; tho' much it is to be feared that ſome few pernicious Examples in this kind have been the moſt prevailing Inducements to unexperienced Youth to run with an abſurd Emulation into the ſame Exceſs of Riot with themſelves. But ought they not rather to be looked upon as ſo many Lights to warn us of our Danger and prevent our ſplitting upon the Rock, than to ſteer by in the Courſe of Life, if perchance there are ſome rare and illuſtrious Inſtances of ſuch uncommon Talents, as a licencious and profligate Life cannot eaſily get the better of? It appears, They cannot indeed altogether extinguiſh them, they can only abuſe and proſtitute them; proſtitute thoſe Gifts which were beſtowed upon them for the Glory of God, and for the Honour of Human Nature, even to the vileſt purpoſes of Obſcenity, Immorality and Profaneneſs. But is not this, in effect, the worſt way of loſing our Underſtanding, thus infamouſly to degrade and diſgrace it?

This Aſcendency of the Appetites over our Intellectual Faculties generally brings on ſooner or later the laſt and greateſt Injury they can receive, in the loweſt and moſt Scandalous Proſtitution of them; namely when All that remains of our Reaſon is ſolely employed to

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cater for and pamper the Appetites; when it has loſt all Authority and Rule, and is become the mere vile Inſtrument of that blind Impulſe which it was born to govern, direct and controul. Little do we deſerve the Name of Reaſonable Creatures, when by an unaccountable inverſion of the Order of Nature, the Appetites have at length by continual encroachment gained an abſolute Sovereignty, and the Maſter is become the Slave. Then when our Reaſon is led Captive of our Luſts, no Creature is leſs Rational than Man. *When the Light which in us is Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs?* Inſtead of Order and Harmony and the Peace of a regular Self-government, the whole frame of our Being is out of Proportion, and what can be the Effect of ſuch Anarchy but Confuſion and every Evil work?

But this Reflection ſuggeſts the latter part of my Enquiry, namely how an Intemperate indulgence in Senſual Pleaſures muſt affect a Man in his Moral and Religious Capacity.

I have already obſerved that there may be an innocent and lawful as well as an irregular and criminal Gratification of the Appetites; and therefore to aſſert with a Stoical Severity, that Pleaſure ariſing from the Senſes can have no poſſible intercourſe or communion with the Vertues, and that to think of introducing it as a Companion to them is "tanquam Mere-"tricem in Matronarum Cœtum adducere,"†, is neither ſerviceable to the Cauſe of Vertue, nor agreeable to Reaſon and Truth. On the contrary, the good Providence of God has ſo

† *Cic. de Fin. Lib.* 2.

diſpoſed

diſpoſed the general Plan of this world, that in order to ſubdue the Natural Deſires to the Intereſt of Vertue, which has, in the ordinary appointment of Things, the promiſe of this Life as well as that which is to come, Men have never upon the whole ſo real and ſincere an Enjoyment of Pleaſures as when they are innocent. But then it muſt be allowed, that unleſs we uſe great Circumſpection and are carefully upon our Guard, they are extremely apt to become the Baits and Allurements to Evil, and to ſeduce us gradually into a diſſolute and irregular Courſe of Life, fatal to every Moral Vertue, and fruitful of almoſt every Vice.

For when Men, as in this caſe, become once habituated to take their Eſtimate of Good and Evil from the mere Animal Senſations, (for Vicious Pleaſures are as great Corrupters of Principles as of Practiſe) they have not in them the Root and Origin of Vertue; they have extinguiſhed all Moral Taſte, all Reliſh of Sublime and Spiritual Pleaſures, without which it is impoſſible that any Habit of Vertue can fix itſelf in the Soul. To become Vertuous we muſt find a Pleaſure in being ſo; and every Pleaſure muſt have its Faculty of Perception ſuited and adapted to it; and we are no more capable of Moral Pleaſures without a Vertuous Diſpoſition, than of Animal Gratifications without the Senſes. — Or could a Principle of Vertue be ſuppoſed to ſubſiſt in the Senſualiſt, how could it exert itſelf in Action, or what poſſible employment could

it find there? For what is the chief Buſineſs of Vertue but to diſcipline, controul and govern the Appetites and the Animal Paſſions; to aſſuage the Violence of their Current; and to deduce and gently lead them in their proper Channels? But is a Moderation of Deſires, is the Government of the Appetites to be found in Men whoſe very Profeſſion it is to inflame them? What! ſhall we look for Abſtemiouſneſs in the Drunkard, or for Continence in the Adulterer?

We may go on to obſerve, that a Voluptuous Life is not only at Variance with every Act of Perſonal Conduct and Self-government, but is likewiſe found to have little Fellowſhip or Alliance with any Kind or Degree of Social Vertue. There is as natural a Connection between the ſeveral Sorts of the Vices as of the Vertues; and the Gradation is as eaſy from the one to the other; ſo that we need not wonder, if thoſe that have indulged themſelves in the Vices of Concupiſcence ſhould ſoon make the reſt familiar to them. They that cannot regulate their Appetites will be as little able to govern the Paſſions that are excited and inflamed by them; and when theſe, in each other's Aid and Aſſiſtance, demand to be gratified, what oppoſite Principle ſhall we ſeek for to counter-act and repreſs their united force? Shall we expect to find in the Voluptuary the kind beneficent Sentiments of Humanity? No. Self-indulgence centers in itſelf; hates all Avocation from Pleaſures; turns away its Face from the Sight of Miſery, or hardens itſelf

ſelf to behold it without Sympathy: *It is not grieved for the affliction of Joſeph*; but it can abundantly create the Diſtreſs which it cannot feel. Does He poſſeſs the uſeful Vertues of the Generous Neighbour, or the diſintereſted ones of the Faithful Friend? On the contrary, where do we find that the Man inflamed with Wine, or tranſported with Luſt is at all apt to conſider whom he offends, or whom he injures; whoſe Reputation he wounds, or whoſe Peace he deſtroys; whoſe Confidence he abuſes, or whoſe Innocence he betrays; what Friendſhips he violates, or what Enmities he creates? Nay, is he not frequently ſeen to break thro' the ſtrongeſt ties even of Natural Affection itſelf; for what degree of it can He be ſuppoſed to retain who abandons himſelf to Vices which muſt certainly waſte his Fortune as well as his Health, and too often entail upon his unhappy Deſcendants Infamy, Poverty and Diſeaſes? Or in ſhort, can he be in any reſpect a uſeful Member of the Community, when Voluptuouſneſs is ſo evidently deſtructive of all Social Happineſs, as it eradicates all thoſe Vertues which are the Support and Strength of Society, and uſhers in all thoſe Vices which diſorder enfeeble, and ſhould they become Epidemical, muſt diſſolve it? For as Induſtry and Frugality are nurſed by Temperance, ſo a Proſtitution to Pleaſures engenders Sloth and Luxury, and muſt be fed by Extravagance; and as that cannot long be ſupported by Integrity and Honeſty, the great Pillars of Civil Socie-

ty, it will ſupport itſelf by Force and Fraud, and every Act of Injuſtice. *From whence*, ſays St. James, *come Wars and Fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your Luſts?* *Ja.*4.1. And in the Catalogue of the Works of the Fleſh enumerated by St. Paul, to *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs*, ſucceed *Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Hereſies, Envyings, Murders.* *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21. *And who hath Woe?* ſays the Wiſe Man, *who hath Sorrow? who hath Contentions? who hath babbling? who hath Wounds without cauſe? They that tarry long at the Wine, they that go to ſeek mixt Wine.* *Prov.* 23. 29, 30.

Let us advance yet one ſtep further, to ſee what ruin and deſolation is made by an irregular Indulgence in Senſual Pleaſures in the higheſt Attainment of Mans Nature, the Chriſtian Life. And if it has been made appear that ſuch an Indulgence does greatly enervate and corrupt the Mind in its mere Natural and Moral State, how much more muſt it war againſt and wound the Soul in its Spiritual one? A Voluptuous Life is at variance with the very Eſſence of the Chriſtian Inſtitution; the great end and deſign of which was to reſcue us from the Dominion of our Luſts, to ſpiritualize our Affections, and to purifie our Nature by the means of Grace, that we might be Veſſels of Honour, ſanctified and prepared for Glory. It is the firſt Engagement we enter into upon our Admiſſion into the Chriſtian Covenant by Baptiſm, "that we renounce "all carnal Deſires of the Fleſh, ſo that we

"will

"will not follow nor be led by them." The External Rite is the Emblem of Purity; and by the Inward Operation of it we are dedicated as Holy unto God: *Our Bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*, who cannot inhabit Impurity and Corruption. In conſequence of this *the Works of the Fleſh* are conſtantly ſet in oppoſition to *the Works of the Spirit*; and *the Carnal Mind* is repreſented *as Enmity againſt God; for it is not Subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can be. Rom.* 8.7. *For the Fleſh*; ſays the ſame Apoſtle, *luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh; and theſe are contrary the one to the other. Gal.* 5.17. So that there is no reconciling the Profeſſion of the Spiritual Religion of Chriſt with an Indulgence in Senſual Luſts; as there is not a Single Chriſtian Grace that can take root and grow in our hearts, unleſs they are firſt purified from all evil and corrupt Affections, from every impure and inordinate Deſire. But *if a Man purge himſelf from theſe, he ſhall be a Veſſel unto Honour, ſanctified and meet for the Maſter's uſe, and prepared for every good Work.* 2 *Tim.* 2.21.

Prepared for the Reception of every Vertue and Grace that can adorn the Chriſtian in this Life; and Prepared for the Exaltation and Reward of them in a better. For indeed this Purity of Heart which our Religion requires of us is no more than what is abſolutely neceſſary to qualifie us for Heaven, and cannot be diſpenſed with from the very Nature of the Happineſs that is there to be revealed. The

Kingdom of Glory is a Spiritual Kingdom; And all the Enjoyments of it are of a Spiritual Nature; And they who will be Partakers of them muſt firſt endeavour to acquire a Reliſh and Savour of things Spiritual, and muſt begin their preparations for Heaven by cultivating thoſe Graces which they ſhall exerciſe hereafter, and by reſtraining thoſe Appetites which can meet with no Gratification there. It is a Notion to which the Light of Nature carried ſeveral of the more exalted Heathens, and which many eminent Chriſtian Writers have thought not diſagreeable to the Revealed Notices of a future State, that the Vicious Inclinations which the Soul contracts in the Body thro' Habits of Luſt and Senſuality and their conſequent Train of Vices, do inſinuate themſelves into the very Subſtance of the Soul, and adhere it to it, like a Leproſy, in its ſeparate State. In this Light it appears, that the Senſualiſt cannot partake of the Joys of Heaven, not only thro' an Excluſion from them by a Moral Decree, but thro' an Inability to taſte them from a Natural Incapacity; and that, with all his depraved Appetites about him, he could have no Senſe of the Pleaſures of Heaven were he placed there. But however that may be, this is certain — that He will never be put to the Trial. Whether the Inclinations themſelves ſubſiſt in the Soul or not, we know at leaſt the Guilt which they communicate will inſeparably cleave to it for ever: And no Pollution will ever be admitted into the Preſence of God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold

Im-

Impurity: He placeth before his Throne thoſe only that are in the white Robes of Righteouſneſs; but neither Drunkards, nor Adulterers, nor Fornicators, nor Unclean Perſons, can have any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God.

I have now gone thro' the ſeveral Conſiderations I purpoſed to lay before you, in order to ſhew what fatal Miſchiefs and irretrievable Ruin an intemperate Purſuit of Senſual Pleaſures brings upon the whole Man, in every Stage and Condition of his Being. And certainly they muſt have great weight with all that retain any Senſe of the Dignity and Perfection of Human Nature; that have any regard for their Health and Peace; for the regular Enjoyment of their Faculties; for the improvement of their Underſtanding; for their encreaſe in Vertue; in ſhort, that have any true Reliſh for Happineſs in this world, or Expectations of Bliſs in that which is to come. Theſe indeed are Conſiderations of general Concern, and affect all Orders and Degrees of Men and of Chriſtians. But there is ſomething ſo peculiar in the Circumſtances of a Learned and Religious Education, and the Topics of this Diſcourſe may be applied with ſuch ſingular Propriety and Force to thoſe who have the Advantages of it, that I ſhall entreat your Patience and Attention a little longer, while I make this ſpecial Application, which, I truſt, may prove as Uſeful as it is Appoſite.

From a thoro' Inſight into Human Nature, with a watchful Eye and kind Attention to the

Vanity

Vanity and intemperate Heat of Youth, with well-weighed Meaſures for the Advancement of all uſeful Literature and the continual ſupport and encreaſe of Vertue and Piety, have the Wiſe and Religious Inſtitutors of the Rules of Conduct and Government in this Place done all that Human Prudence could do, to promote the moſt excellent and beneficial Deſign by the moſt Rational and well-concerted Means. They firſt laid the Foundation well, in the Diſcipline and Regulation of the Appetites. They put them under the Reſtraint of wholeſome and frugal Rules, to place them out of the reach of Intemperance, and to preclude an Exceſs that would ſerve only to corrupt, inflame and torment them. They are fed with Food convenient for them; with Simplicity yet Sufficiency; with a kind tho' cautious Hand. By this means the Seeds of Vice are ſtifled in their Birth; Young Perſons are here deſigned to be put out of the Way of Temptations, to which others from a leſs happy Situation are too frequently expoſed; and from an early Habit of Temperance and Self-command they may learn either to prevent all irregular Sollicitations, or with eaſe to controul them. Happy are they, who by a thankful enjoyment of theſe Advantages, and a willing Compliance with theſe Rules, lay up in ſtore for the reſt of their Life Vertue, Health and Peace!

Vain indeed would be the Expectation of any real Progreſs in Intellectual and Moral Improvements, were not the Foundation thus laid in ſtrict Regularity and Temperance; were

were the Senſual Appetites to be pampered in Youth, or even vitiated with that degree of Indulgence which an extravagant World may allow and call Elegance, but *here* would be downright Luxury. The Taſte of Senſual Pleaſures muſt be checked and abated in them, that they may acquire a Reliſh of the more Sublime Pleaſures that reſult from Reaſon and Religion; that they may purſue them with effect, and enjoy them without avocation. And have they not in this Place every Motive, Aſſiſtance and Encouragement to engage them in a Vertuous and Moral Life, and to animate them in the Attainment of uſeful Learning? What Rank or Condition of Youth is there that has not daily and hourly opportunities of laying in Supplies of Knowledge and Vertue, that will in every Station of Life be equally ſerviceable and ornamental to themſelves, and beneficial to Mankind?

And ſhall any one dare to convert this Houſe of Diſcipline and Learning, into a Houſe of Diſſoluteneſs, Extravagance and Riot? What an Aggravation of Guilt do they load themſelves withal, who at the ſame time that they are purſuing their own Unhappineſs, ſacrilegiouſly break thro' all the Fences of good Order and Government, and by their Practice, Seducement and Example do what in them lies to introduce into theſe Schools of Frugality, Sobriety and Temperance all the mad Vices and vain Gayeties of a licencious and voluptuous Age? What have they to anſwer for, who while they Profligately Squander away

away that moſt precious part of Time, which is the only Seaſon of Application and Improvement, to their own irretrievable loſs, do moreover encourage one another in an idle and Senſual courſe of Life, and by ſpreading wide the Contagion reflect a Scandal upon, and ſtrive to bring into Publick Diſeſteem, the Place of their Education, where Induſtry, Literature, Vertue, Decency, and whatever elſe is Praiſe-worthy did for Ages flouriſh and abound? Is this the genuine Fruit of the pious Care of our Anceſtors for the Security and propagation of Religion and good Manners to the lateſt Poſterity? Is this at laſt the Reward of their Munificence? Or does this Conduct correſpond with their Views, or with the juſt expectations and Demands of your Friends and your Country?

Nor let any one vainly imagine that the Time and valuable Opportunities which are now loſt can hereafter be recalled at Will; or that He who has run out his Youthful days in Diſſipation and Pleaſure will have it in his power to ſtop when he pleaſes, and make a wiſer uſe of his riper Years. Yet this is too generally the fallacious Hope that flatters the Youth in his Senſual Indulgences, and leads him inſenſibly on in the treacherous ways of Vice, 'till it is now too late to return. There are few who at one Plunge ſo totally immerge in Pleaſures as to drown at once all power of Reaſon and Conſcience. They promiſe themſelves that they can indulge their Appetites to ſuch a Point only, and can check and turn them

them back when they have run their allotted Race. How agreeable to unexperienced Youth is the plauſible but deluſive Plea! — "Detur "aliquid Ætati; ſit Adoleſcentia liberior; non "omnia Voluptatibus denegentur; non ſem- "per ſuperet vera illa & directa Ratio; vincat "aliquando Cupiditas Voluptaſque Rationem; ". . . . poſtremó, cum paruerit Voluptatibus, "dederit aliquid temporis ad ludum Ætatis at- "que ad inanes haſce Adoleſcentiæ Cupidita- "tes, Revocet ſe aliquando ad curam Rei do- "meſticæ, Rei forenſis, Rei publicæ, ut ea "quæ Ratione antea non perſpexerat, Satie- "tate abjeciſſe, Experiendo contempſiſſe vi- "deatur."† I do not indeed ſay that there never have been Perſons in whom the ſtrong Ferment of Youthful Luſts may have happily ſubſided, and who may have brought forth Fruits of Amendment and diſplayed many eminent Vertues. God forbid! that even the moſt licencious Vices of Youth ſhould be abſolutely incorrigible. But I may venture to affirm that the Inſtances in this caſe have been ſo rare, that it is very dangerous for any one to truſt to the Experiment upon a preſumption that He ſhall add to the Number. The only ſure way to make any Proficiency in a Vertuous Life is to ſet out in it betimes. 'Tis then, when our Inclinations are trained up in the way that they ſhould lead us, that Cuſtom ſoon makes the beſt Habits the moſt agreeable; the Ways of Wiſdom become the Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and every Step we advance they grow more eaſy and more delightful. But

† *Cic. pro Cælio.*

on the contrary, when Vicious head-ſtrong Appetites are to be reclaimed, and inveterate Habits to be corrected, what Security can we give ourſelves that we ſhall have either Inclination, Reſolution or Power to ſtop, and turn back, and recover the right Way from which we have ſo long and ſo widely wandered, and enter upon a new Life, when perhaps our Strength now faileth us, and we know not how near we may be to our Journey's End?

Theſe Reflections I have ſuggeſted principally for the ſake of thoſe, who allowing themſelves in greater Indulgences than are conſiſtent with a Liberal and Vertuous Education, do thereby give evident proofs that they are not ſufficiently aware of the dangerous Encroachments and the peculiar Deceitfulneſs of Pleaſurable Sin. Happy for them! would they once ſeriouſly conſider their Ways; and no Time can be more proper than when theſe Solemn Seaſons of Recollection and Religious Diſcipline ſhould particularly diſpoſe them to Seriouſneſs and Thought. They would then diſcover, that tho' they are awhile carried gently and ſupinely down the ſmooth Stream of Pleaſure, yet anon the Torrent will grow too violent to be ſtem'd; the Waves will ariſe, and daſh them upon Rocks or ſink them in Whirlpools. It is therefore the part of Prudence to ſtop ſhort while they may; and to divert their Courſe into a different Channel, which, whatever Obſtructions and Difficulties they may labour with at firſt, will every day become more practicable and pleaſing, and will

aſſuredly

aſſuredly carry them to a ſerene and ſecure Haven. But if neither the Apprehenſion of the Dangers, Anxieties and Miſeries, that are the ſure Attendants upon Vice and Voluptuouſneſs in this Life, can awaken their Fears; nor the Aſſurance of that calm Self-poſſeſſion, that regular Enjoyment of all the Faculties of Body and Mind, that Health, Peace and Joy which are the Aſſociates of Temperance and Vertue, can win upon their Inclinations; then — *Rejoice, O Young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart chear thee in the days of thy Youth, and walk in the ways of thy Heart, and in thy ſight of thine Eyes: but know thou, that for All theſe things God will bring thee into Judgement.* *Eccleſ.* 11. 9.

FINIS.

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